A Satyam Roychowdhury Initiative

EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN PERCEIVED MEANING OF LIFE AND ORGNIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG INDIAN PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES

This dissertation is submitted for the partial fulfillment for the degree of

M.SC. IN APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (SPECIALIZING IN ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND MANAGEMENT PSYCHOLOGY)

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Work under the Supervision of

PROF. DR. RAJ SEKHAR AICH

Professor

Department of Psychology, Sister Nivedita University

Submitted By

ANKITA ROY

MSc Applied Psychology

(Organizational and Management Psychology)

Department of Psychology, Sister Nivedita University

Examined
Dr. Rita Kanungo
05.05.25

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DECLARATION

'I, Ankita Roy, pursuing a Master's from Sister Nivedita University, Department of Applied Psychology hereby, declare that the research work titled "Exploring the Interplay between Perceived Meaning of Life and Organizational Commitment among Indian Private Sector Employees" has been completed with full honesty and integrity. I confirm that the work is original, and all sources of information have been appropriately acknowledged and cited. Furthermore, I found that the research work has undergone through plagiarism check to ensure its authenticity. I take full responsibility for the content and findings presented in the research and the dissertation from it.'

Name – Ankita Roy

Enrollment No –2322230002107

Registration No-230021079030

Program: Master of Science in Applied Psychology (Organizational and Management Psychology)

Semester: 4

Year : 2023-2025

Ankita Roy
30.04.25

Signature of the Student

A Satyam Roychowdhury Initiative

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Exploring the Interplay between Perceived Meaning of Life and Organizational Commitment among Indian Private Sector Employees" being submitted by Ankita Roy, a 2nd year MSc student in Organizational and Management Psychology, Sister Nivedita University, is as bonafied work , which may be placed before the board of examiners for their evaluation. This is an partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master in Science in Applied Psychology is an authentic record of research work carried out by her on my supervision and guidance.

This is an original study done by the candidate and has not been submitted by her before in any form for any other degree of this University or any other University.

Date: 30.4.25

Place: Kolkata

Work under supervision of

Prof. Dr. Raj Sekhar Aich

Professor

Sister Nivedita University

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Ankita Roy

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment among Indian private sector employees, and to examine whether gender differences exist in these variables. A sample of 60 participants was assessed using standardized questionnaires. Spearman's rank-order correlation revealed a weak positive but statistically non-significant relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment. Mann-Whitney U and independent samples t-tests showed no significant gender differences in organizational commitment and perceived meaning of life, respectively. The findings suggest that personal existential beliefs and workplace commitment may operate independently among Indian private sector employees and that gender does not significantly influence these constructs. These results contribute to a growing understanding that individual experiences and contextual workplace factors, rather than gender, play a crucial role in shaping both organizational commitment and perceptions of life meaning. Future research should further investigate potential moderating variables to deepen the understanding of this relationship within diverse organizational settings.

Keywords: *perceived meaning of life, organizational commitment, gender differences, private sector employees, India.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1
OBJECTIVE 7
HYPOTHESIS 7
LITERATURE REVIEW 8
METHODOLOGY 17
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS..... 17
AIM OF THE STUDY 17
SAMPLE 18
RESEARCH DESIGN 19
TOOLS USED 20
PROCEDURE 21
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS 21
RESULTS 22
DISCUSSION 26
LIMITATIONS.....29
IMPLICATIONS 29
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH.....30
CONCLUSION 31
REFERENCES..... 32
APPENDICES 34

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the interplay between perceived meaning in life and organizational commitment is pivotal in understanding workplace dynamics, as both concepts significantly influence employee behavior and organizational outcomes. The relationship between perceived meaning in life and organizational commitment is intricate. Employees who find meaning in their personal lives are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction and demonstrate stronger commitment to their organizations. Conversely, organizations that foster a sense of purpose and meaning in the workplace can enhance employees' overall life satisfaction. This interplay suggests that personal fulfilment and professional dedication are mutually reinforcing, contributing to positive workplace dynamics. Understanding this interplay is crucial for organizations aiming to improve employee engagement, reduce turnover, and enhance overall productivity. By acknowledging and addressing the factors that contribute to both personal meaning and organizational commitment, employers can create a more fulfilling and dynamic work environment.

The perceived meaning of life as “the extent to which people comprehend, make sense of, or see significance in their lives, accompanied by the degree to which they perceive themselves to have a purpose or overarching aim in life”(Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, 2006). This definition encompasses two primary components**:** Presence of Meaning & Search for Meaning. The presence of Meaning refers to the degree to which individuals perceive their lives as significant and purposeful. It involves understanding oneself and one's place in the world. And the Search for meaning pertains to the strength, intensity, and activity of individuals' efforts to establish or enhance their understanding of the meaning and purpose of their lives. These components are assessed using the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), developed by Steger et.al , which measures both the presence of and the search for meaning in life.

Building upon the foundational work of Steger, Frazier, Oishi, and Kaler (2006), subsequent research has further elucidated the significance of perceived meaning in life within the

workplace. Steger and Dik (2009) found that individuals actively seeking global meaning in life reported higher well-being and self-efficacy in career decision-making when they experienced meaningfulness in their work. This suggests that the pursuit of life meaning can be partially fulfilled through engaging work, leading to improved psychological outcomes. Moreover, meaningful work has been identified as a moderator in the relationship between work stress and overall life meaning. Steger et al. (2010) demonstrated that employees who perceive their work as meaningful are better equipped to handle work-related stress, thereby maintaining a stronger sense of life purpose. These research underscore the critical role that meaningful work plays not only in enhancing job satisfaction and performance but also in contributing to employees' broader sense of life purpose and well-being. Organizations that prioritize and cultivate meaningful work environments may therefore witness benefits such as increased employee engagement, resilience, and retention. Organizations that support employees in finding personal and professional meaning tend to experience lower turnover rates and higher employee commitment. Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012) developed a comprehensive measure of meaningful work, highlighting its significance in enhancing organizational commitment and reducing turnover intentions. Furthermore, research indicates that meaningful work is strongly related to greater organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and moderately associated with lower turnover intentions and reduced stress and burnout.

A strong sense of meaning in life is closely linked to enhanced life satisfaction, reduced stress levels, and improved overall well-being. Ryff and Keyes (1995) conceptualized psychological well-being as encompassing six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Their research demonstrated that individuals who perceive their lives as meaningful tend to exhibit higher levels of life satisfaction and better psychological health. Furthermore, the presence of meaning in life has been associated with lower levels of psychological distress and mental illness, including reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety. These refers the importance of cultivating a sense of meaning to promote mental health and overall well-being. Individuals who perceive a higher meaning in life often display elevated intrinsic motivation and resilience across various domains, including the workplace. Baumeister (1991) identified four essential needs that contribute to life's meaning: purpose, value, efficacy, and self-worth. These elements collectively enable individuals to regulate their behavior effectively toward achieving specific goals, thereby fostering intrinsic motivation.

This intrinsic drive not only enhances engagement and satisfaction but also bolsters resilience when facing challenges. Moreover, research indicates that a strong sense of meaning in life is associated with greater psychological well-being, which contributes to an individual's capacity to cope with stress and adversity. In the workplace, this translates to employees who are not only more motivated but also better equipped to navigate obstacles and maintain productivity under pressure.

Logotherapy is different from psychoanalysis in that its methods are less retrospective and less introspective (Frankl, 1959). Logotherapy focuses on the future aspects of a patient's life, more specifically the meaning that one intends to fulfill (Boeree, 2006). *Logos* is the Greek word, which denotes meaning. Hence, logotherapy focuses on a person's search for meaning. This search for meaning in one's life is postulated as the primary motivational force (Frankl, 1959). Viktor Frankl introduced logotherapy in his 1959 work, "Man's Search for Meaning," defining it as a form of psychotherapy centered on the belief that the primary drive in human beings is the search for meaning in life. Frankl posited that, unlike Freud's "will to pleasure" or Adler's "will to power," the foremost motivational force in individuals is the "will to meaning." He asserted that life holds meaning under all circumstances, even the most miserable ones, and that our primary motivation is the discovery and pursuit of what we personally find meaningful. Frankl's approach emphasizes that while we cannot always control our circumstances, we can choose our responses, and through this choice, finds meaning. This perspective was profoundly shaped by his experiences and observations during his time in Nazi concentration camps, where he noted that individuals who found meaning in their suffering were more resilient.

Research by Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) highlights the significant role that workplace relationships and organizational culture play in shaping employees' perceptions of meaningful work. Their study introduces an interpersonal sense making model, suggesting that interactions with colleagues and the broader work environment serve as critical cues through which individuals interpret and derive meaning from their roles. For instance, employees who engage in positive relationships and feel supported within their workplace culture are more likely to view their work as purposeful and significant. Viktor Frankl emphasized that individuals can discover meaning even amidst challenging circumstances, a concept that holds significant relevance in the workplace. Employees who confront workplace challenges with a purpose-driven mindset often demonstrate heightened resilience

and commitment. Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) highlight that the quest for meaning is a universal human motive, and when individuals perceive their work as meaningful, they are better equipped to navigate adversities and remain dedicated to their organizations. This perspective suggests that fostering an environment where employees can find purpose in their roles not only enhances their ability to cope with difficulties but also strengthens their allegiance to the organization. Organizations that integrate purpose-driven leadership can significantly enhance employee motivation and reduce turnover. Dik, Byrne, and Steger (2013) emphasize that when leaders cultivate a sense of purpose and meaning within the workplace, employees are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. This alignment between personal values and organizational goals fosters an environment where employees feel their work is meaningful, thereby increasing motivation and decreasing the likelihood of turnover.

Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) define organizational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. This commitment consists of three key components: a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership within the organization. These elements collectively reflect an employee's psychological attachment and loyalty to their workplace. To measure these dimensions, Mowday et al.(1979) developed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), is a 15-item scale designed to measure employees' commitment to their organization. Using a 5-point Likert scale, it assesses the extent to which employees identify with organizational goals, are willing to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and desire to maintain membership. The OCQ has been widely validated and remains a fundamental tool in organizational behavior research for evaluating employee commitment levels.

Organizational commitment significantly influences key workplace outcomes, including job performance, absenteeism, and employee retention. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) explored these dynamics in their work, "Employee-Organization Linkages: The Psychology of Commitment, Absenteeism, and Turnover," highlighting that employees with strong organizational commitment are more likely to perform effectively, exhibit lower absenteeism, and have reduced turnover intentions. Their research underscores the importance of fostering organizational commitment to enhance overall organizational effectiveness. Allen and Meyer

(1990) proposed a three-component model of organizational commitment, comprising affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with strong affective commitment are more likely to exert greater effort and remain with the organization long-term. Continuance commitment pertains to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization, while normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to stay. Their research indicates that higher levels of affective commitment are positively correlated with desirable outcomes such as increased job performance and reduced turnover intentions.

Research by Steger, Littman-Ovadia, Miller, Menger, and Rothmann (2013) highlights the significant role that perceiving meaning in life plays in enhancing employees' connection to their organizations and their commitment to their roles. When individuals find profound meaning in their existence, this sense of purpose often extends into their professional lives, fostering a deeper alignment with their organization's values and objectives. This alignment not only strengthens their emotional attachment to the organization but also enhances their dedication and motivation in their respective roles. The study suggests that organizations that recognize and support their employees' pursuit of meaningfulness can cultivate a more engaged and committed workforce. By integrating opportunities for personal growth and emphasizing the significance of each role within the broader organizational mission, employers can enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates. The importance for organizations to create environments that not only acknowledge but actively promote the meaningful engagement of their employees, thereby fostering a culture of commitment and shared purpose. Viktor Frankl's logotherapy posits that the primary drive in human beings is the search for meaning in life. This perspective suggests that work can serve as a significant source of meaning, leading employees who find purpose in their jobs to exhibit stronger commitment to their organizations. Research supports this notion, indicating that individuals who perceive their work as meaningful are more likely to demonstrate increased job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment. For instance, a study exploring the application of logotherapy in the workplace found that facilitating meaning in work contexts can enhance employees' experiences and potentially improve organizational outcomes. Research by Glavas and Piderit (2009) indicates that companies fostering meaningful work environments benefit from reduced employee turnover and enhanced workplace satisfaction. Their study suggests that corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives contribute to

creating such environments, as employees engaged in socially responsible activities often find greater purpose in their work. This alignment between personal values and organizational actions leads to increased job satisfaction and a stronger commitment to the company, ultimately decreasing turnover rates. Therefore, organizations that prioritize meaningful work through CSR and other initiatives not only enhance employee well-being but also experience improved retention and overall performance.

Hence, through this research, I want to find the relationship between these two variables in the field of corporate and elaborate on that relationship.

In this research, I am trying to assess and analyze the possible relationship between Perceived meaning of life and Organizational Commitment among employees.

OBJECTIVE:

To examine the relationship between Perceived Meaning of Life and Organizational Commitment among employees in the Indian private sector.

HYPOTHESIS:

This current study assesses the relationship between Perceived Meaning of Life and Organizational Commitment. Consequently, the null hypothesis that will be tested in this research is:

1. **$H0_1$:** There is no significant relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment.
2. **$H0_2$:** There is no significant difference between Organizational Commitment based on gender.
3. **$H0_3$:** There is no significant difference between Perceived Meaning of Life based on Gender.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the rapidly changing landscape of modern workplaces, it is essential to understand the elements that shape employee attitudes. Among these, perceived meaning in life and organizational commitment have emerged as key psychological constructs influencing workplace behavior. The concept of meaning in life, drawn from existential psychology, involves an individual's perception of purpose and personal significance (Steger, 2009). Organizational commitment, according to Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), refers to an employee's connection to the organization, reflected in their alignment with its values, willingness to contribute, and intention to stay.

Emerging evidence indicates that individuals who experience a stronger sense of meaning in life often develop deeper emotional engagement with their work (Allan et al., 2019). Despite this, research directly examining the relationship between these two constructs—particularly through the use of Mowday et al.'s Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)—remains sparse. This literature review seeks to examine existing findings on this relationship, highlight existing research gaps, and set the stage for further study within the realm of organizational psychology.

Clark, M. (1997), ***Work Cultures and Meaningful Work: "A Study of Meaning and Organizational Commitment"*** focused on the relationship between work culture and employees' perceptions of meaningful work and how this influences organizational commitment. Addressing the early gap in how meaning at work shapes employee attitudes, Clark explored different types of work cultures — including bureaucratic, supportive, and innovative — and found that supportive cultures provided employees with a stronger sense of purpose and belonging. His findings highlighted that meaningful work is a significant predictor of organizational commitment, with employees who experience their work as meaningful displaying higher loyalty, reduced turnover intentions, and stronger emotional ties to their organization.

Markow and Klenke (2005), in their influential study *"The Effects of Personal Meaning and Calling on Organizational Commitment,"* investigated the intricate relationship between personal meaning, the experience of work as a calling, and the level of commitment an individual exhibits towards their organization. Grounded in the emerging discourse of spiritual leadership and existential psychology, their research aimed to dissect how different sources of personal meaning, particularly self-transcendence (i.e., deriving purpose beyond self-interest), contribute to the psychological experience of calling. Utilizing Wong's Personal Meaning Profile, they surveyed professionals from service-oriented sectors, revealing that self-transcendent meaning sources, such as altruism and service to others, were strong predictors of perceiving one's work as a calling rather than merely a job or career. Importantly, those who experienced a calling were found to exhibit significantly higher levels of organizational commitment compared to those who did not. Calling acted as a crucial mediating variable linking meaning to commitment. Their findings have substantial implications for organizations seeking to cultivate deep loyalty among employees, suggesting that initiatives promoting personal growth, purpose, and contribution beyond the self can serve as a catalyst for developing a dedicated and resilient workforce. The study also highlights that not all dimensions of meaning equally contribute to commitment, emphasizing the need for strategic, values-based human resource practices.

Steger, Frazier, Oishi, and Kaler (2006), in their seminal paper *"The Meaning in Life Questionnaire: Assessing the Presence of and Search for Meaning in Life,"* addressed a critical methodological gap in existential and positive psychology by developing and validating a concise and psychometrically robust measure of life meaning. Recognizing that previous instruments often conflated distress and meaning or lacked clear factor structures, the authors designed the MLQ to distinguish two core dimensions: the *presence* of meaning and the *search* for meaning. Across three studies involving diverse samples—including college students and working adults—the MLQ demonstrated excellent internal consistency, strong temporal stability across multiple months, and impressive discriminant and convergent validity with related constructs like life satisfaction and psychological distress. The multitrait-multimethod matrix analyses particularly confirmed that the MLQ subscales reliably differentiated between having meaning and actively seeking it. Importantly, the MLQ showed no significant item overlap with depression or anxiety scales, ensuring it measured existential constructs independently of psychopathology. Their work has profound relevance for workplace research, allowing scholars to better assess how employees' existential orientations

influence their engagement, satisfaction, and organizational loyalty. It opened pathways for future research examining how the presence or absence of meaning differentially impacts organizational behavior.

Schnell, T., & Becker, P. (2006). ***Personality and Meaning in Life.*** explored how personality traits relate to individuals' sense of meaning in life. The research particularly addressed how meaning orientations (such as spirituality, self-transcendence, generativity) impact psychological well-being and behavioral outcomes. Their findings confirmed that individuals who perceive greater meaning in life — often aligned with intrinsic values and transcendent goals — show better mental health outcomes and greater engagement with life activities, including work. Importantly, their study implied that fostering sources of meaning could translate into higher organizational commitment by satisfying employees' existential needs within workplace contexts.

Maharaj and Schlechter (2007), in their empirical study ***"Meaning in Life, Meaning of Work and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour in an Accounting Firm,"*** investigated the intricate relationships between employees' perceptions of meaning (both meaning in life and meaning of work), job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) within the context of a public accounting firm. Recognizing that meaning has often been studied separately from organizational outcomes, the authors aimed to empirically test how existential constructs like meaning interact with important workplace behaviors. They surveyed a sample of 102 participants, comprising both trainee and qualified Chartered Accountants (CAs), using standardized questionnaires measuring each construct. Their findings revealed that there were significant positive correlations among all the studied variables: employees who experienced higher meaning in their lives and work also reported greater job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, and increased engagement in citizenship behaviors (proactive, helpful behaviors beyond formal job requirements). Notably, meaning was found to have both direct and mediated effects on OCB through its influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Further statistical analyses involving Z-score standardizations revealed that the relationships between work satisfaction, organizational commitment, OCB, and meaning (both meaning of work and meaning in life) were consistent and not statistically different from each other, indicating a robust general effect of existential meaning across workplace constructs. The study underscores the profound importance of fostering meaning in employees' lives and work as a strategic

approach to enhance organizational effectiveness. By demonstrating that both personal life meaning and work-specific meaning contribute to organizationally beneficial behaviors, Maharaj and Schlechter highlighted that meaning acts as a critical psychological driver of success, particularly in high-demand professional settings like accounting. Their findings advocate for organizational interventions aimed at helping employees find personal significance in their roles, which in turn could cultivate stronger commitment, satisfaction, and extra-role behaviors that benefit the organization.

Lips-Wiersma, M., & Morris, L. (2009). ***Discriminating between 'Meaningful Work' and the 'Management of Meaning'.*** delved into distinguishing authentic meaningful work from management-driven constructions of meaning. Their research addressed a critical problem: organizations increasingly attempt to "manage" meaning to boost productivity without necessarily considering the employee's personal experiences. Their findings revealed that authentic meaningful work stems from four fundamental human aspirations — developing and becoming self, unity with others, expressing full potential, and service to others. Contrarily, attempts to manufacture meaning through corporate agendas often led to employee cynicism. This study emphasizes that fostering genuinely meaningful work experiences is central to enhancing organizational commitment and employee well-being.

Panaccio and Vandenberghe (2009), in their study ***"Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Commitment and Psychological Well-being: A Longitudinal Study,"*** explored the nuanced interplay between the support employees perceive from their organizations and their psychological well-being over time, mediated through different styles of organizational commitment. Using a longitudinal panel design with 220 participants from various industries, they controlled for traditional workplace stressors like role ambiguity and conflict to isolate the pure effects of perceived organizational support (POS). Their findings revealed a complex dynamic: affective commitment (emotional attachment) was positively associated with well-being and mediated the positive effects of POS, while perceived lack of employment alternatives (continuance commitment) negatively impacted well-being. Normative commitment (obligation-based loyalty) and perceived sacrifice had no significant relationship with well-being. These results have important implications for organizational leaders, suggesting that merely retaining employees out of necessity or obligation is insufficient for promoting healthy workplaces. Instead, organizations must foster emotional connections, mutual respect, and genuine support to cultivate both loyal and psychologically

healthy employees. This study ties into broader theories like Social Exchange Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory, highlighting that emotional bonds formed through perceived support are vital psychological resources for employees.

van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Schreurs, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2009), through their research *"Does Meaning-Making Help During Organizational Change?"*, contributed significantly to understanding how employees psychologically adjust to organizational change processes. They proposed that meaning-making—the ability to interpret difficult or ambiguous events through a value-based, coherent narrative—serves as a key coping mechanism during transitional periods. Utilizing a longitudinal research design across two waves of data collection from Dutch employees undergoing restructuring, the authors developed a specialized meaning-making scale and validated it against established measures of self-efficacy, optimism, and positive reinterpretation coping. Results showed that meaning-making was distinct from other personal resources and that it uniquely predicted higher work engagement, increased willingness to embrace change, and improved job performance, even under stressful conditions. Their findings suggest that promoting narrative processes and reflective sense-making among employees during organizational changes can act as a protective psychological strategy, enhancing resilience and adaptive behaviors. The study bridges existential psychological theory and organizational change management, offering practical guidance for HR leaders aiming to support employee well-being and performance during periods of uncertainty and turbulence.

Garg and Rastogi (2009), in their investigation *"Effect of Psychological Well-being on Organizational Commitment,"* delved into the vital relationship between employees' overall psychological happiness and their commitment to their organizations. Drawing on a sample of 100 participants from various private and public sector organizations in India, the researchers employed a combination of standardized psychological well-being and organizational commitment measures, followed by stepwise regression analysis. The study found a significant and positive correlation, wherein employees exhibiting higher levels of general happiness, life satisfaction, and positive affect were also those demonstrating stronger organizational commitment. Their findings lend empirical support to the spillover model, suggesting that personal domain experiences can profoundly influence work-related attitudes. This study emphasizes that fostering psychological well-being through employee assistance programs, work-life balance initiatives, and positive organizational cultures can translate

directly into tangible organizational benefits, including reduced attrition and heightened loyalty. The study thus advocates for a humanistic, well-being-centered approach to HR management.

Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J., & Duffy, R. D. (2012). "*Measuring Meaningful Work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI)"* aimed to operationalize the concept of meaningful work through the development of the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI). Their study addressed the lack of robust tools for quantifying meaningful work experiences. Through rigorous scale validation, they demonstrated that meaningful work is composed of three dimensions: positive meaning in work, meaning-making through work, and greater good motivations. The findings highlighted that employees who experience high levels of meaningful work exhibit stronger organizational commitment, higher job satisfaction, and reduced turnover intentions. This study significantly advanced organizational psychology by offering a practical tool for measuring and enhancing meaning at work.

Beukes and Botha (2013), in their comprehensive research *"Organizational Commitment, Work Engagement and Meaning of Work of Nursing Staff at Various Hospitals,"* examined the crucial influence of how nursing staff perceive their work's meaning on their organizational commitment and engagement levels. In a sector plagued by resource shortages, high burnout, and limited career advancement opportunities, their study sought to understand what sustains commitment among nursing professionals. Using a cluster sampling technique, they surveyed 199 nursing staff across various South African hospitals, employing validated tools like the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), and the Work-Life Questionnaire. Their findings indicated that a large majority of nurses viewed their work either as a "job" or a "calling," with the calling orientation being significantly associated with higher organizational commitment and work engagement. Regression analysis revealed that perceiving work as a calling accounted for 19% of the variance in organizational commitment and 30% of the variance in work engagement. Importantly, the study demonstrated that enhancing the perceived meaningfulness of work can serve as a buffer against negative workplace stressors. Their research advocates for interventions that help employees reframe their work as meaningful, thus supporting higher motivation, resilience, and retention in critical professions like healthcare.

George and Park (2016), in their conceptual paper *"Meaning in Life as Comprehension, Purpose, and Mattering: Toward Integration and New Research Questions,"* proposed an influential tripartite framework for understanding the complex construct of meaning in life (MIL). Their work emerged from the recognition that despite extensive research, the meaning in life literature lacked a unified structure that could integrate various theories, empirical findings, and broader existential constructs. They argue that meaning in life can be best conceptualized as comprising three interrelated subcomponents: comprehension (the cognitive sense of understanding one's life and experiences), purpose (the motivational aspect involving valued goals and pursuits), and mattering (the evaluative sense that one's life is significant and valued). Through an extensive synthesis of empirical studies and theoretical arguments, George and Park highlight that these three components, while distinct, often interact dynamically to form the overall experience of meaning. Importantly, they emphasize that existing research has often disproportionately focused on purpose, neglecting the roles of comprehension and mattering. They suggest that future studies should systematically explore the interplay among these three dimensions, their separate contributions to well-being, and their integration with larger meaning systems and meaning-making processes. Their framework encourages researchers to consider how meaning judgments (cognitive evaluations) and meaning feelings (emotional responses) arise from the functioning of comprehension, purpose, and mattering, offering a more nuanced and holistic view of how people experience life meaning. Moreover, George and Park call for greater integration of meaning in life research with broader psychological theories, such as terror management theory and social-cognitive models, to better understand how individuals navigate existential threats and societal challenges. Their tripartite model has become a foundational guide for subsequent empirical investigations aiming to unpack the layered nature of meaning in both life and work domains, making it highly relevant for organizational, clinical, and developmental psychology contexts.

Kim, Nurunnabi, Kim, and Jung (2018), in their study *"The Mediating Role of Perceived Meaning of Work and Perceived Organizational Support in the CSR-Organizational Commitment Relationship,"* explored how corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives influence employees' internal psychological processes, ultimately affecting their organizational commitment. Involving a two-wave time-lagged survey design, they gathered data from 378 full-time employees working in South Korean corporations. They proposed a sequential mediation model where perceived CSR practices enhanced employees' sense of

meaningful work, which then increased their perceptions of organizational support (POS), subsequently leading to stronger organizational commitment. Their structural equation modeling analysis confirmed this mediation chain. The results revealed that CSR acts as a psychological resource, reinforcing that socially responsible corporate actions do not merely fulfill external obligations but also foster positive employee attitudes internally by imbuing their work with higher purpose and signaling organizational care. This study reframes CSR as a vital human resource management strategy, demonstrating that ethical organizational behavior can significantly strengthen the psychological bonds employees form with their employers, thereby boosting engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

Afshari (2021), in her qualitative study *"Self-Definition and Identity Enactment Leading to Organizational Commitment,"* contributed a novel lens to understanding how personal identity processes impact employees' emotional attachment to their organizations. Through in-depth qualitative interviews with employees from an Australian manufacturing firm, Afshari explored how employees' desires to create meaningful self-definitions through their professional roles influenced their commitment levels. Thematic analysis revealed that when employees could align their personal values, goals, and self-concepts with their organizational roles, they developed strong affective commitment to the organization. Conversely, when organizational structures or cultures inhibited such identity enactment, employees felt alienated and disengaged. Afshari's research underscores the critical role of meaning in identity construction and the importance of organizations facilitating meaningful work identities. For HR development, her findings suggest that enabling employees to connect personally with their work through career development programs, value alignment, and authentic leadership practices can foster higher organizational loyalty and reduce turnover.

Humphrey and Vari (2021), in their timely study *"Self-Perceived Meaning in Life Buffers COVID-19 Related Stress,"* examined how individuals' perceptions of life meaning served as a psychological resource during the global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a cross-sectional survey of 260 Australian participants, they assessed meaning in life using the MLQ, intrinsic and extrinsic life aspirations, and pandemic-related stress through the Impact of Events Scale. Their results indicated that higher levels of perceived meaning in life predicted significantly lower levels of COVID-19-related stress and anxiety. Intrinsic aspirations (such as fostering personal growth, relationships, and community connection)

were positively related to meaning in life, while extrinsic aspirations (like wealth, fame, and status) were negatively related. Notably, intrinsic aspirations not only bolstered meaning but also indirectly buffered participants from pandemic-induced stress. Their findings affirm existential psychological theories positing meaning as a fundamental human need, and they highlight the practical importance of fostering meaning-oriented, intrinsic goal-setting among employees to enhance resilience during collective crises and organizational upheavals.

Sameer, Eid, and Veenhoven (2023), in their expansive meta-analytic review *"Relation Between Perceived Meaning in Life and Happiness,"* sought to synthesize existing empirical findings on the relationship between perceived life meaning and subjective happiness. Analyzing data across a wide array of studies with diverse methodologies, populations, and cultural contexts, they found a consistent and moderately strong positive relationship between perceived meaning and happiness. Their analysis further differentiated between two facets of meaning: the "presence" of meaning correlated significantly more strongly with happiness than the "search" for meaning. Interestingly, they also found variability in the strength of this relationship depending on age, suggesting that the life stage may influence the dynamics between meaning and happiness. Their findings support the broader positive psychology framework which asserts that a meaningful life is central to enduring well-being. For organizational research and practice, this meta-analysis underscores the vital importance of fostering employees' experiences of actualized meaning (rather than merely promoting endless searching), as a way to enhance their satisfaction, engagement, and long-term organizational loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

A research methodology portrays the procedures and methods utilized to identify and analyze information regarding a particular research topic. It could be a process by which researchers plan their study so that they can accomplish their objectives utilizing the selected research instruments. It includes all the vital viewpoints of research, including research plan, data collection methods, data analysis methods, and the in general framework within which the research is conducted.

Operational Definitions:

1. Perceived Meaning of life - In the present study, Perceived Meaning of Life refers to the extent to which individuals feel that their lives are purposeful, significant, and coherent. It was measured using a standardized questionnaire, where higher scores indicate a greater perceived sense of meaning and direction in life.

2. Organizational Commitment - In this study, Organizational Commitment is defined as the psychological attachment and loyalty an individual feels toward their organization. It reflects the willingness to remain a part of the organization and to work toward its goals. Organizational commitment was assessed using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. (1979), where higher scores represent stronger commitment to the organization.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment among employees working in the Indian private sector.

SAMPLE :

In this research, **non-probability sampling** has been utilized, which implies members were chosen based on convenience or specific criteria instead of random selection. This method permits simpler access to significant respondents but may constrain the generalizability of the findings.

Purposive Sampling: Participants are purposely selected based on specific characteristics relevant to this research.

The current sample (N=60) consisting of 35 male employees and 25 female employees with educational qualifications either graduate or post-graduate having any work experience at any Indian private sector participated in this research.

Inclusion Criteria:

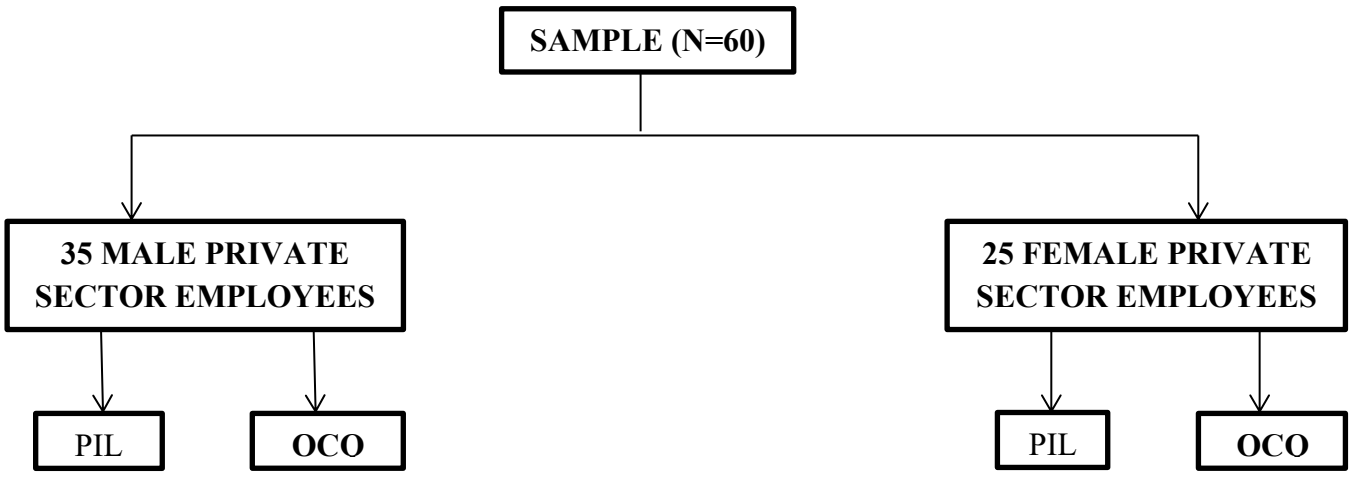
- Residing in India.
- Age between 18-60 years.
- Private sector employee.
- Having at least 6 months of work experience.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Below 18 years of age .
- Less than 6 months of job tenure in their current organization.
- Currently unemployed, on long-term leave, or in internship/training programs.
- Engaged in other primary professions and/or out of India .

RESEARCH DESIGN: The research design provides a systematic framework for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in order to address the research objectives and hypotheses. It ensures that the study maintains methodological rigor, reliability, and validity throughout the research process.

This study adopts a correlational and comparative research design to investigate the relationship between perceived purpose in life and organizational commitment among employees, and to examine gender differences in both constructs. By utilizing standardized instruments such as the Purpose in Life Scale developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. (1979), the study ensures reliable and valid measurement of these psychological constructs. Non-parametric statistical analyses, including Spearman's rank-order correlation and Mann-Whitney U tests, were used due to violations of normality assumptions in some variables. The study maintained participant confidentiality and adhered to ethical standards throughout the research process.



TOOL USED

1. Purpose In Life (PIL)- The Purpose in Life (PIL) Scale, developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964), is a widely used instrument designed to measure an individual's perceived meaning and purpose in life, based on Viktor Frankl's existential theory. The scale consists of 20 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where responses typically range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total score can range from 20 to 100, with higher scores indicating a stronger sense of life purpose and existential fulfillment. The scale has demonstrated good reliability and validity across diverse populations and is frequently employed in both clinical and organizational research. In the context of the present study, the PIL scale is used to assess the degree to which private sector employees experience their lives as meaningful, which may influence their organizational commitment.

2. Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)- The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), is a well-established tool used to assess an employee's emotional attachment, identification with, and involvement in their organization. The scale includes 15 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total scores range from 15 to 75, with higher scores reflecting stronger organizational commitment. The OCQ is unidimensional, focusing primarily on affective commitment. To ensure accurate measurement, six items—Items 3, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 15—are reverse-scored, as they are negatively worded statements reflecting weaker commitment. The scale has consistently demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values typically above .80, making it a robust instrument for organizational research. In this study, the OCQ is employed to evaluate the organizational commitment of employees in the Indian private sector.

PROCEDURE

The Purpose in Life (PIL) Scale and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) were selected to measure participants' perceived meaning in life and their level of organizational commitment, respectively. A research design was constructed according to which the whole research proceeded. For data collection, a Google Form was created incorporating the statements from both the PIL scale and the OCQ, along with demographic questions. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, based on their eligibility as per the established inclusion criteria. The form was distributed across multiple social media platforms**,** and participants were provided with clear instructions. Additional assistance was made available via email when needed. Responses were collected exclusively from individuals with work experience in the private sectors**.**

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data collected was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 30). Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were computed to understand the general distribution of the variables—Perceived Meaning of Life (PIL) and Organizational Commitment (OCQ). The assumption of normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Results indicated that PIL was approximately normally distributed ($W = .979$, $p = .372$), while OCQ significantly deviated from normality ($W = .875$, $p < .001$). Based on this, non-parametric statistical techniques were applied where appropriate. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine the relationship between PIL and OCQ, as one of the variables did not meet the normality assumption. Additionally, the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to assess differences in Organizational Commitment across groups with high and low levels of PIL, as well as across gender, due to the non-normal distribution of OCQ. An independent samples t-test was used to compare PIL scores between genders, since PIL met the assumption of normality. All analyses were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULT

Statistical analysis of the data of 60 participants, determined the following results:

Table 1: Mean & standard Deviation of Perceived meaning of Life and Organizational Commitment.

Descriptive Statistics

	Perceived Meaning of Life	Organizational commitment
Mean	72.2	49.6
Standard Deviation	13.2	6.86
Shapiro-Wilk W	.979	.875
Shapiro-Wilk p	.372	<.001
N	60	60

The table 1 presents descriptive statistics and results from the Shapiro-Wilk test for two variables: Perceived Meaning of Life and Organizational commitment.
The Sample Size (N): All two variables were measured in a sample of 60 participants.

The Shapiro-Wilk test checks if the data follows a normal distribution:

Perceived Meaning of Life: W=.979 , p= .372

Interpretation: Since $p > 0.05$; data is approximately normal.

Organizational Commitment: W=.875, p= <.001

Interpretation: since $p< 0.05$; data is significantly deviates from normality.

Table 2: Spearman's Rank correlation Coefficient between Perceived Meaning of Life and Organizational Commitment.

Correlation

Variables	Spearman's rho Correlation value	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Perceived Meaning of Life & Organizational commitment	.201	.124	60

Spearman's rank order correlation is a non-parametric test used when at least one of the variables is not normally distributed—which is the case here, as shown in Table-1 where Organizational commitment failed the Shapiro-Wilk normality test.

From the above table 2 , it can be seen that the correlation value(Spearman's rho) is .201 and the p value is .124, this findings indicates **a** weak positive correlation between two variables Perceived Meaning Of Life and Organizational Commitment**.**

Since the **p>0.05**, this means there is no statistically significant relationship between Perceived Meaning Of Life & Organizational Commitment.

Hence, Null Hypothesis $H0_1$ is accepted.

Table 3: Mann- Whitney U test on organizational commitment based on gender.

Mann-Whitney U Test

Variables	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	Z	p value (2 tailed)
Organizational Commitment	**Male(0)**	**Female(1)**	**427.000**	**-.158**	**.874**
	30.80	**30.08**			

Since Organizational Commitment is not normally distributed**,** Mann-Whitney U Test was performed instead of a regular t-test.

From the above table, It can be seen that A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to examine gender differences in organizational commitment.

The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in organizational commitment between males (Mean Rank = 30.80) and females (Mean Rank = 30.08), Mann-Whitney U = 427.000, Z = -0.158, p value (2 tailed)= .874

Since the **p>0.05**.

Hence, the null hypothesis $H0_2$ is accepted.

Table 4: Independent sample T-test on Perceived Meaning of life based on gender.

Independent sample T-test

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**df**	**p-value**
Perceived Meaning Of Life	Male(0)	35	72.40	13.60	0.126	58	0.900
	Female(1)	25	71.96	12.88			

Since Perceived Meaning of Life is **normally distributed**, **Independent T test** was performed.

From the above table, It can be seen that an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference in the Perceived Meaning of life scores between male and female participants. The results showed that males (M = 72.40, SD = 13.60) and females (M = 71.96, SD = 12.88) did not differ significantly in their Perceived Meaning of life scores, t(58) = 0.126, p = .900. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that gender does not have a significant impact on the perceived meaning of life among participants. Since the p>0.05, this means there is no statistically significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis $H0_3$ is accepted.

DISCUSSION

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment.

In the present study, it has been found that there is no significant relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment among Indian private sector employees. As shown in Table 2, the Spearman's rank-order correlation indicated a weak positive correlation (Spearman's $\rho = .201$, $p = .124$) between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment. Although individuals who perceive greater meaning in life may show slightly higher organizational commitment, the association was not statistically significant.

This is in line with prior research by Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012), who emphasized that meaningful life experiences contribute to work engagement but organizational commitment is often determined by additional factors such as work environment and leadership support. Additionally, Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) highlighted that meaning derived from work is distinct from personal existential meaning, suggesting that a meaningful life does not necessarily guarantee organizational loyalty.

Therefore, based on the statistical analysis presented, the null hypothesis ($H0_1$) is accepted, indicating no significant relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in organizational commitment based on gender.

In the present study, it has been found that there is no significant difference between male and female employees in terms of organizational commitment. The results are presented in Table 3, where the Mann-Whitney U test showed no significant difference (U = 427.00, p = .874) between the organizational commitment levels of male and female participants.

This supports Clark's (1997) findings, which indicated that changing societal norms and greater workplace gender equity have minimized differences in organizational attitudes. In earlier contexts, men may have displayed greater organizational commitment due to societal expectations; however, in contemporary work environments, men and women seem to show comparable dedication to their organizations.

This result reflects the evolving Indian private sector culture, where both genders are increasingly given equal career opportunities. Hence, in this study, the null hypothesis ($H0_2$) is accepted, showing that gender does not significantly affect organizational commitment.

$H0_3$: There is no significant difference in perceived meaning of life based on gender.

In the present study, it has been found that there is no significant difference between male and female participants in terms of perceived meaning of life. As detailed in Table 4, results from the independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference ($t(58) = 0.126$, $p = .900$) in perceived meaning of life scores between males and females.

This finding is consistent with Schnell and Becker's (2006) research, which argued that meaning in life is influenced primarily by personal values, existential exploration, and life experiences rather than by demographic variables such as gender. In the Indian socio-cultural context, both men and women may similarly seek meaning through family, spirituality, and professional fulfillment, resulting in no gender-based differences.

Thus, the null hypothesis ($H0_3$) is accepted, indicating that gender does not significantly influence perceived meaning of life.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that there is no significant relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment among Indian private sector employees. Furthermore, no significant gender differences were found in either organizational commitment or perceived meaning of life. These results suggest that organizational loyalty and personal existential beliefs may function independently in this population, and that gender does not play a determining role in shaping either construct. The findings contribute to a growing understanding that workplace behaviors and personal existential orientations are influenced more by individual and contextual factors rather than demographic characteristics like gender.

LIMITATIONS :

- The study had a small sample size (N = 60), limiting generalizability.
- The cross-sectional design prevents establishing causal relationships.
- Organizational commitment data were not normally distributed, requiring non-parametric tests.
- Findings are specific to Indian private sector employees and may not generalize to other contexts.
- Only two variables were studied, excluding other possible influencing factors like job satisfaction or leadership style.
- There is limited previous research combining these two variables.

IMPLICATIONS:

The findings of this study have several important implications for organizations and researchers. Since no significant relationship was found between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment, it suggests that organizational strategies aiming to enhance employee commitment should focus more on workplace-related factors such as leadership support, career development opportunities, and organizational culture, rather than solely on employees' personal sense of life meaning.

Additionally, the absence of gender differences in both organizational commitment and perceived meaning of life highlights that organizational policies and practices can be designed to be gender-neutral, promoting equal opportunities and support systems for all employees.

These results indicate that interventions aimed at improving employee loyalty and engagement should address professional and contextual factors within the workplace environment.

For researchers, the findings encourage future exploration of additional variables that may mediate or moderate the relationship between personal existential factors and organizational behavior, thus offering a broader understanding of employee dynamics in the Indian private sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the findings and limitations of the present study, several directions for future research are recommended. Expanding the scope and depth of investigation can offer a more comprehensive understanding of how perceived meaning of life relates to organizational commitment, particularly in diverse organizational and cultural contexts. Future research should also consider additional variables and methodological improvements to enrich the study of these constructs.

- Larger and more diverse samples should be used to increase the generalizability of results across different industries and regions.
- Longitudinal studies are recommended to explore the dynamic relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment over time.
- Inclusion of additional variables such as job satisfaction, organizational culture, and leadership styles could help in identifying potential mediators or moderators.
- Cross-cultural research could investigate how cultural factors shape the relationship between life meaning and organizational behavior in different countries.
- Qualitative research methods such as interviews or case studies could provide deeper, more personal insights into how employees experience and connect meaning of life to workplace commitment.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to explore the interplay between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment among Indian private sector employees, while also examining gender differences in these variables. Based on the analysis of data from 60 participants, it was found that there is a weak positive but statistically non-significant relationship between perceived meaning of life and organizational commitment. Additionally, no significant differences were observed in organizational commitment and perceived meaning of life based on gender. These findings suggest that organizational commitment may be influenced more strongly by professional and contextual factors within the workplace, rather than by personal existential beliefs. The absence of gender differences further indicates that both male and female employees experience similar levels of commitment to their organizations and perceive similar levels of life meaning. Overall, this study contributes to the limited body of research combining these two constructs and offers valuable insights into employee behavior in the Indian private sector context. It also highlights the need for future research using larger, more diverse samples and additional variables to deepen the understanding of how personal and organizational factors interact in shaping employee experiences.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-I

Purpose In Life (PIL): The Purpose in Life Scale (PIL) was developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick in 1969.

The Purpose in Life Test (PIL)

(Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964)

Write the number (1 to 5) next to each statement that is most true for you right now.

Items	Rate each item from 1 to 7	
1. I am usually:	bored 1 ----------2----------3----------4----------5	enthusiastic
2. Life seems to me:	completely routine;	always exciting.
3. In life I have:	no goals or aims;	clear goals and aims.
4. My personal existence is:	utterly meaningless, without purpose	purposeful and meaningful.
5. Every day is:	exactly the same;	constantly new and different.
6. If I could choose, I would:	prefer to never have been born;	want 9 more lives just like this one.
7. After retiring, I would:	loaf completely the rest of my life	do some of the exciting things I've always wanted to
8. In achieving life goals I've:	made no progress whatever	progressed to complete fulfillment
9. My life is:	empty, filled only with despair	running over with exciting things
10. If I should die today, I'd feel that my life has been:	completely worthless	very worthwhile
11. In thinking of my life, I:	often wonder why I exist	always see reasons for being here
12. As I view the world in relation to my life, the world:	completely confuses me	fits meaningfully with my life
13. I am a:	very irresponsible person	very responsible person
14. Concerning freedom to choose, I believe humans are:	completely bound by limitations of heredity and environment	totally free to make all life choices
15. With regard to death, I am:	unprepared and frightened	prepared and unafraid
16. Regarding suicide, I have:	thought of it seriously as a way out	never given it a second thought
17. I regard my ability to find a purpose or mission in life as:	practically none	very great
18. My life is:	out of my hands and controlled by external factors	in my hands and I'm in control of it
19. Facing my daily tasks is:	a painful and boring experience	a source of pleasure and satisfaction
20. I have discovered:	no mission or purpose in life	a satisfying life purpose

APPENDIX-II

Organizational Commitment questionnaire (OCQ): The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was developed by **Mowday, Steers, and Porter** in **1979**.

No.	Items	(1) strongly disagree-------(5) strongly disagree
1	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	1 2 3 4 5
2	I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	1 2 3 4 5
3	I feel very little loyalty to this organization. (R)	1 2 3 4 5
4	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	1 2 3 4 5
5	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	1 2 3 4 5
6	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	1 2 3 4 5
7	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. (R)	1 2 3 4 5
8	This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	1 2 3 4 5
9	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. (R)	1 2 3 4 5

10	I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11	There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. (R)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12	Often. I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. (R)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13	I really care about the fate of this organization.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
14	For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
15	Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. (R)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**